

Langston Hughes

Poet Description:

For several decades Langston Hughes was simultaneously the foremost African American poet and the premier poet of the American Left. Without understanding that double identity and dual cultural role, there is little chance of winning a full or fair appreciation of his life and work. Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, but grew up mainly in Lawrence, Kansas. Before enrolling at the historically black Lincoln University, he had worked at numerous menial jobs but also seen Africa, Mexico, and Paris. He would later make trips to the Soviet Union and to Spain during the Spanish Civil War. "Letter from Spain" was written in the midst of that war and handed to American poet Edwin Rolfe in Madrid for publication in the International Brigades magazine *Volunteer for Liberty* in November, 1937. Hughes would also write several stage plays and musicals, along with numerous newspaper columns, an autobiography, and several collections of short stories featuring his character Simple. Jazz and the blues remained a strong influence from his first books to the masterful collage poem *Ask Your Mama* (1962). Throughout his career, the typical Hughes poem communicated a rich social and political vision through deceptively simple language; his apparently straightforward rhetorical surfaces are intricately nuanced. He wrote some of America's most telling indictments of racism but also reached out to the poor of all ethnic backgrounds. And he was one of the few male poets of his generation who could write persuasively both about women and within a female persona.

Race/Ethnicity:

African ^[1]

Picture:



Gender:

Male ^[2]

Sexuality:

Gay ^[3]

First Name:

Langston

Last Name:

Hughes

Birth & Death Dates:

Saturday, February 1, 1902 to Monday, May 22, 1967

School of Poetry:

Harlem Renaissance ^[4]

Birth Place:

Joplin , Missouri

United States

See map: Google Maps ^[5]

Missouri US

Death Place:

New York City , New York

United States

See map: [Google Maps](#) [6]

New York US

Group visibility:

Private - accessible only to group members

Tags:

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[2] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/category/gender/male>

[3] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/category/sexuality/gay>

[4] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/school-poetry/harlem-renaissance>

[5] <http://maps.google.com?q=46.880607+-87.363281+%28%2C+Joplin%2C+MO%2C+%2C+us%29>

[6] <http://maps.google.com?q=40.714353+->

[74.005973+%28%2C+New+York+City%2C+NY%2C+%2C+us%29](http://maps.google.com?q=40.714353+-74.005973+%28%2C+New+York+City%2C+NY%2C+%2C+us%29)

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